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14 April 1981

Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 13/81)



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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

ANALYSIS OF HASSAN II'S 'SPIEGEL' INTERVIEW

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 18 Feb 81 pp 20-21

[Article by Abdelaziz Dahmani: "Sahara: Is the War Over?"]

[Text] At the beginning of last January King Hassan II gave a surprising interview to the German magazine DER SPIEGEL. In it he asserted with an air of supreme authority that the war is over in the Sahara! His remarks seemed so astonishing to us that we needed the confirmation provided by their publication in the Moroccan press in order to start pondering their real significance.

Was he making an effort to mount a psychological operation? Or was he expressing a premature hope? It looks like the explanation is to be found out in the field.

At first the Moroccans attempted to maintain the security of the uncontested southern part of the country (Tantan, Tata, Akka and Assa) and the so-called "useful" part of Western Sahara where the population is concentrated (El Aiun, Smara, and Bujdur) and where there are important economic interests, such as at Bou Craa.

In order to achieve this objective, they concentrated on "cleaning up" the Warkziz range which runs south to Wadi Draa and on creating an impressive sand barrier surrounding the "useful" Sahara.

According to what headquarters promised, this barrier was supposed to be completed at the end of 1980. However, the POLISARIO, who understood what the Moroccans were driving at, started concentrating all its effort on stopping this encirclement and fought fiercely at Abatih, Ras-El-Khanfra, El-Kreibichet, Ras-El-Hmiret, etc.

The POLISARIO's stubborn resistance was not ineffective: in mid-February 30 km were still not sealed off and there was continued fighting. With that section completed, the Moroccans would be in a position to say that the war had virtually ended, since the area considered to be "useless" is less hilly terrain where the Royal Army thinks it can more easily overcome its enemies.

Anyway it is in precisely this area where the POLISARIO regularly takes its guests around, following a route that has become standard: from Tindouf (in Algeria) to Mahbes to Jdiria to Haouza; and it is there that on 28 February the POLISARIO will be celebrating the sixth anniversary of the SDAR (Saharan Arab Democratic Republic) being proclaimed.

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To say that the war is over is undoubtedly premature, but the POLISARIO itself, realizing the import of this maneuver, has started to withdraw a sizable portion of its forces from Mauritania. This is so it will not find itself pinned in Tindouf in a situation which would cause problems with Algeria.

At the moment the king's interview represents an event which deserves attention, and contacts between Algerians and Moroccans represent the first steps of a tortuous progress toward normalizing relations between those two neighboring countries.

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

STATUS OF MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN TALKS ON WESTERN SAHARA

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 18 Feb 81 pp 23-24

[Excerpted article by Mohamed Selhami: "Negotiation, But With Whom?"]

[Excerpts] So what has happened to suddenly make the word "peace" the current state of Moroccan-Algerian relations?

However, the two countries have never stopped collaborating, particularly in the security area. The intelligence services of Rabat and Algiers have traded "what they have by way of pieces of information" even in the military area. In addition, the border, which had been declared closed, was never really tightened up. The comings and goings of businessmen never stopped, and neither did those of people visiting who had family on both sides.

Neither Algeria nor Morocco likes to admit these tacit relations. Similarly they have kept quiet about the respective punishments inflicted in 1980 on several soldiers from both sides who were caught playing cards together near the Figuig barracks.

One month after the El Asnam disaster the border between the two countries became even more porous. Airports started receiving visitors on one side and the other.

On the diplomatic level, an Algerian charge d'affaires was named for Rabat, and similarly a Moroccan consul general was assigned to Algiers (JEUNE AFRIQUE Number 1044). In parallel fashion Algiers and Rabat are outdoing each other in friendly declarations. In both capitals people are starting to think that 1981 might bring peace.

And Algeria has given up its place as the Front's top weapons supplier to Libya, not without considering the consequences, particularly in the wake of the Chad events.

In Rabat as well there seems to be a gradual change in the direction of coming to an understanding. Thus a referendum in the Sahara is no longer an impossible event. By the same token a meeting between the POLISARIO and Moroccan political parties can be envisaged. There are as well democratic developments in Morocco. Hassan II does not have his "absolute monarch" complex any more. This is one more point in his in the steps he is taking vis-a-vis Algiers.

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There is a new situation here whose further development is feared by the Saharans. They are trying, not without difficulty, to adapt themselves, particularly by seeking the good offices of Paris. But will France still be able to play that role, now that Algerians and Moroccans seem to be on the road which will lead them to harmony?

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

BRIEFS

ALGERIA-MOROCCO AGREEMENT--Algeria is said to be ready to give up its support for the Polisario and, in return, Morocco would guarantee Algeria access to the Atlantic Ocean. [Text] [Paris PARIS MATCH in French 20 Mar 81 p 80]

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IRAN

INTERNAL STRIFE, WAR WITH IRAQ REVIEWED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 13-19 Feb 81 pp 38-39

[Article: "The War on the Domestic Iranian Front after the Drama of the Hostages; The Wing of Clerical Cloaks Is Preparing Itself for the Destruction of the Laymen's Wing"]

[Text] What will happen after the hostages? How far has the struggle between the laymen and the men with the clerical cloaks gone? What is the true situation on the battle fronts? AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI publishes today a literal translation of a dispatch on this subject it received from a European correspondent who is visiting Iran at the present time.

The drama of the hostages has not yet come to an end. It has become an inseparable part of the violent struggle for power between the wing of the men with the clerical cloaks and the wing of laymen.

The laymen's wing, which is led by President Abol Hasan Bani-Sadr, thought that the opportunity was suitable for discrediting the wing of the men with the clerical cloaks which had undertaken the process of reaching a settlement with the United States regarding the hostages.

In doing so Bani-Sadr is relying on the "meager gains" Iran reaped from the agreement. He thinks that insisting on this idea would be extremely embarrassing to the men with the clerical cloaks and would cover up the devastating failure that befell the Iranian counterattack early last January. Bani-Sadr holds himself personally responsible for ordering that attack.

While Bani-Sadr is calling for an official investigation into the circumstances and the conditions surrounding the "ludicrous agreement," the wing of the men in clerical cloaks thinks that no other agreement could have been better. Prime Minister Mohammed 'Ali Raja'i, who is considered one of the men of the clerical cloaks, says that nothing more could have been taken away from the "Great Satan." Here, the "Great Satan" in Iran's political jargon is the United States.

The fact of the matter is that the difficult, decisive days for the wing

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of the men in the clerical cloaks, represented by the Islamic Republican party, had begun the moment the hostages were released.

The internal struggle will focus on the question of the war and the deteriorating economy. There are many Iranians, and among them are supporters of the party, who consider the settlement that was achieved with Washington to be unfair. They think it constitutes a setback for the party after it had turned the question of the hostages into a slogan for its struggle.

The Islamic Republican party is not exactly a political organization as much as it is a broad platform on which the religious establishment sits. It utilizes the mosques of Husayn as its headquarters. Its authority is also curiously interwoven with that of the government so that no one knows where the party's authority ends and where the state's authority begins.

What adds to the mystery of the struggle is the fact that there are no democratic traditions and no strong political and constitutional organizations. It may be that one of the most important reasons for Bani-Sadr's failure to tighten his control over government is the inability of his supporters to turn his overwhelming victory in the presidential elections to a unified political party organization.

Day after day, the struggle becomes more tense and more sharp. Ayatollah Mohammed Beheshti is the leader of the wing of the men in the clerical cloaks. He is a gloomy and mysterious religious figure whose deep, hoarse voice suggests melancholy. Beheshti is a tricky politician who is skillful in contriving political intrigues against his opponents. Bani-Sadr is experiencing great hardships from him just as [other] laymen had experienced them previously, from Bakhtiar to Mehdi Bazargan, and including Karim Sanjabi.

Beheshti is the leader of the Republican party, and he presides over the revolutionary courts. During the administration of the Shah he was a civil servant in the Ministry of Education. Then he was sent to the Iranian Embassy in Bonn to look after the religious affairs of the Iranian students abroad. He returned suddenly to become Khomeyni's authorized representative in Tehran. He was the one who supervised Khomeyni's return to Iran about 2 years ago.

Foremost among Beheshti's aides and supporters come Hashemi Rafsanjani, the speaker of the parliament; Musavi Kho'ini, Khomeyni's representative in the Supreme Defense Council; Mohammed 'Ali Raja'i, the prime minister; and Behzad Nabavi, the minister of state who undertook to negotiate with the Americans [matters] relating to all the hostages.

The party does not have a clear policy on the internal front or on the foreign front. There are no ideas about development, about dealing with the economic crisis, about directing the oil policy or about dealing

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with the outside world. Full coordination is also lacking among the clerical members of the party. However, what does bring those leaders together is the fear that the army may be reorganized and the authority of the laymen expanded. They are using the almost absolute control they have in their areas on all the Iranians to exert pressure on their political opponents or to overthrow them. They may even lead their opponents to the execution fields.

Bani-Sadr benefits from the errors of the men in the clerical cloaks and from the fact that they lack an integrated view of the situation [now] or in the future. Bani-Sadr has many supporters, but they in turn are not organized, and they fear the tyranny and the demagoguery of Beheshti's supporters.

Bani-Sadr is nevertheless daring in his attacks on his political opponents, but he attacks them without naming them. To do so, he uses his newspaper, INQILAB-E ISLAM [The Islamic Revolution] for this purpose. There is also the newspaper, AL-MAYZAN, which is close to Mehdi Bazargan, the former prime minister.

Bani-Sadr is trying to portray himself as the hero of the Islamic Revolution, rising to sacrifice his life on the battlefield or in an assassination attempt, to which, he insists, he is always subject. The most recent statement in this regard was that which he made about a plan to fire missiles at his car in Khuzistan while he was reviewing the armed forces. In an attempt to motivate and stimulate the army in order to drive it into the heat of the internal struggle, Bani-Sadr says that it was military intelligence that revealed the "conspiracy" to assassinate him. However, when he is asked about the details, he resorts to silence under the pretext that the circumstances of the war require secrecy now.

The struggle is approaching its inevitable explosive climax, and the indications for this are numerous. Other than the media campaigns, there are armed clashes that develop unexpectedly between the supporters of Bani-Sadr and those of the Islamic Republican party. Any visiting observer who sees the situation from nearby would expect negative results for the struggle which may threaten disaster for Iran's political future and for the unity of its peoples.

The Conditions Surrounding the Negotiations with Washington

Much information has become available here about the conditions surrounding the complicated and lengthy negotiations between Iran and the United States regarding the hostages. When the war between Iraq and Iran broke out last September, Iran unexpectedly sought a quick solution to the question of the hostages. It may be that the motive for that was to get weapons, ammunition and spare parts.

In this context it was found out that Sadiq Tabataba'i, one of Khomeyni's close relatives, had met secretly in Bonn with Warren

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Christopher, the assistant U.S. secretary of state who later became closely associated with the entire negotiations process. Tabataba'i is married to a German woman, and he used to be press attache at Iran's embassy in Bonn during the administration of the Shah. Tabataba'i speaks German fluently.

Then there were other rapid meetings through Algeria whose mediation the United States had asked for instead of Bonn's. Those who participated in the mysterious, secret negotiations in Europe and in New York were Cyrus Vance, the former secretary of state; Hamilton Jordan, White House counsel to former president Carter; and Harold Saunders, assistant secretary of state. The latter two made several secret visits to several European capitals for that purpose.

Bani-Sadr became extremely angry when Khomeyni prevented him from going to New York to hold a secret meeting with Vance. At that time Bani-Sadr offered his resignation from his position as minister of foreign affairs in protest.

As time went by, Washington was able to persuade the Iranians, especially through Algeria, to give up most of their conditions. These included the formal U.S. apology and the monetary ransom that was offered in exchange for the hostages. Washington also changed the Iranians' minds about returning the Shah's wealth, and they were satisfied with a symbolic U.S. promise in that regard.

Informed Iranian sources state that Algeria played a major role in the process of inducing Raja'i's "compliance" and preparing him as well as the wing of men in clerical cloaks to enter into a process of serious negotiations with Washington. Raja'i yielded to a "brainwashing" process in Algeria when he stopped there on his return from New York to Tehran.

In the military area the Iranian side is satisfied with the statements it makes magnifying the losses of the Iraqis. However, Iranian officials, especially Bani-Sadr's wing, have resorted to absolute silence since the failure of the counterattack.

There are distorted Iranian admissions that the Iraqis have regained the land they had lost in the beginning of the attack in addition to the new land they had captured. But the leadership of the Iranian military staff has formally acknowledged that it had opposed the counterattack which Bani-Sadr had ordered because the armed forces had not been prepared for it. The Iranian military command is complaining about the interference of civilian elements in directing its military operations. It is the men in the clerical cloaks and the leaders of the Revolutionary Guard who are intended here.

The situation on the battle fronts may be summarized as follows:

The Iraqi siege of Abadan continues and so does the continuous artillery shelling of the town.

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The concentrated artillery shelling on Ahvaz, the capital of Khuzestan (Arabistan) province [continues].

The situation is critical for the Iranians in the Susangerd section, which was the scene of the Iranian counterattack that failed.

There is concentrated shelling of the oil installations and oil pipes in the Dezful section.

The Iraqis are maintaining full control of the situation in the section of Qasr-e Shirin, [located] on the principal road between Baghdad and Tehran.

The Kurds, supported by the Iraqis, are launching concentrated attacks on the northern front. The Iraqis there have taken over strategic mountain passes that would make their thrust into the interior [of Iran] easier if they wanted that.

In general, the war on the long battle lines is assuming the character of an artillery duel. We are waiting for the weather to improve in the spring; then, the situation will depend on the circumstances.

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LEBANON

VIOLENCE, ASSASSINATIONS IN POLITICS DISCUSSED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 20-26 Feb 81 pp 16-18

[Article: "The Diplomacy of Liquidations in the Lebanese Jungle"]

[Text] The kidnapping of al-Muhaysan Brings Syrian-Jordanian relations back to the boiling point.

There is political and popular turmoil in Beirut just as there is in Amman. Disregard for the Lebanese state has reached such limits that it has become inconceivable to keep quiet about [that situation]. The breakdown of diplomatic immunity through the use of weapons is an open attempt to force Arab and foreign diplomatic missions to leave the country. Is the outbreak of a new kind of war with Jordan--a war of diplomatic liquidations--what some people have in mind, or is the kidnapping of the Jordanian charge d'affaires in Beirut the inauguration of a new stage in the Lebanese war in which Lebanon will become the testing field?

The kidnapping of Jordanian charge d'affaires, Mr Hisham al-Muhaysan crowns a group of successive events witnessed by the Lebanese capital in recent months. These events had targeted Arab and foreign diplomats. In September and October of 1980 the U.S. embassy came under rocket attack, and the embassies of Iraq, Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia came under similar attacks. In the next 2 months armed elements attacked a Belgian diplomat in the western section of Beirut, and the Iraqi Cultural Center was subjected to a new attack. Late in December a French diplomatic vehicle was blown up with dynamite, and several missiles were fired on the garden of the French embassy. Demonstrators also attacked the offices of the United Nations.

But the new incident is different from the previous ones because it constituted an armed, direct forcible break into the sanctity of an Arab diplomat's home after having its entrances, its exits and all the hallways leading to it surrounded in an organized and well-considered operation in which scores of armed men participated. In this sense the incident is considered more than a mere attack against a building, a car or

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facilities. It was an obvious military deterrent [intended] for a representative of an Arab state on Lebanese territory.

Diplomatic Discharge

From this perspective we can understand the wave of fear that prevailed in Arab and foreign diplomatic circles in the heart of Beirut. Diplomats rushed to seek help from armed agencies to guard their homes, their embassies and their families while awaiting the "security ring" which the Lebanese government had promised after the incident. Some diplomats went to the PLO, and others went to the Syrian deterrent forces themselves. It's been said that Mr Yasir 'Arafat responded to more than appeals in other than Arab embassies and that the Palestinian organizations volunteered to protect a number of embassies in accordance with standards that are well-known in Lebanon. These have to do with the affiliation of this or the other group with this or the other state.

Although the Lebanese government had in the past permitted a number of foreign embassies to procure guards from abroad because the area where the embassies are located does not fall under its direct protection, Lebanese officials are apprehensive that in a justifiable preventive measure, more than one Arab and foreign agency may reduce the size of their diplomatic representation in Beirut within certain limits.

Because Lebanese officials realize the magnitude of the danger that would result from taking the diplomatic delegations away from Lebanon, they rushed to look for a reassuring way out [of this dilemma] before matters should get out of control. The formula that was achieved in the absence of the Lebanese army from West Beirut was that of charging the police force with the task of providing security for the diplomats; summoning the reserves for service; and distributing them over scores of diplomatic centers in the capital.

Lebanese officials are being helped in carrying out these measures in the regions of the deterrent forces by the fact that the Arab and foreign diplomatic corps does not trust the Syrian protection of the embassy district. That protection had led to more than one attack. The Arab and international uproar condemning the recent kidnapping constitutes pressure on the Syrian deterrent forces to force them to accept any Lebanese security decision.

It is evident that the nature and the consequences of al-Muhaysan's kidnapping provide indisputable evidence of Lebanon's official impotence on the one hand and of the fact that Lebanon is subject to intra-Arab disputes which practice the most offensive crimes over Lebanese territory.

The Incident and the Stories

How did the incident happen?

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At 1:30 a.m. on Friday, February 6 about 20 or 25 armed men forced themselves into the home of the Jordanian diplomat which is located on the second floor of Muhammad Ra'd's Building in the quarter of Bi'r Hasan west of Beirut. They had stopped four cars near the entrance [to the building] and on the road leading to it. A number of the men wore masks; they broke into the glass entrance to the building and shot two Jordanian soldiers and a Lebanese gendarme who were guarding the house. The attackers and the guards exchanged fire, and Jordanian soldier 'Abd-al-Salam Salim Arshid (30 years old) was killed. The sergeant in the Jordanian army, Muhammad Salim Karim (29 years old) and the Lebanese gendarme, Bahjat As'ad Sharif were wounded. While a team of the armed men set up a roadblock, another team went to the second floor of the building. They fired shots at the door of Mr al-Muhaysan's apartment, removed the door and entered the living room. They began searching the rooms [of the apartment], and they found his maid, Zakiyyah Khuri and detained her. Then they entered the bathroom where al-Muhaysan had sought refuge, and they detained him too. Before leaving the apartment they emptied the bullets in their automatic weapons in the rooms, and they broke some of the contents [of the apartment]. They took a few safes and odds and ends. Then they forced al-Muhaysan to put on his clothes quickly, and they transported him and his maid to one of the four cars that were waiting near the building. Then they rushed to an unknown destination. A few witnesses indicated that the armed men continued to fire shots to cover their retreat until they were able to cover some distance on the road.

After the armed men left, the neighbors of the charge d'affaires rushed to notify the police. The police came and found near the building a Pontiac vehicle, [license] number 128557, that was sprayed with bullets. Inside the vehicle was the body of a man called Adib Khalil Khalifah (38 years old) who was shot by accident during the melee as he was passing in the quarter. He was the owner of a sea-food store in al-'Uza'i.

The police searched the place, and they found that the contents of al-Muhaysan's apartment had been thrown into disorder and the effects of the bullets [that had been fired] were still evident everywhere, including the entrance to the building and the sides of the elevator. They also found the Jordanian sergeant and the Lebanese gendarme wounded and bleeding. They had them transported to American University Hospital where they underwent emergency surgery and were placed in the intensive care unit. However, the Lebanese gendarme died of his wounds soon afterwards.

Although the immediate legal investigation which was quickly undertaken by the competent authorities yielded no result to speak of, the publications that were found in the reception rooms of al-Muhaysan's home which bore the signature of the Leftist Arab National Organization--the Vanguard of Revolutionary Violence--the Lebanese Region, increased the mystery surrounding the kidnapping incident. It was the first time the name of this organization had been heard of. It is an organization whose publications advocate the overthrow of King Husayn's regime; it attacks his positions and criticizes the Jordanian media campaign that is directed against Syria.

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This mystery was accompanied by an expression of official displeasure. President Sarkis, the prime minister, Mr Shafiq al-Wazzan and the minister of foreign affairs, Mr Fu'ad Butrus denounced the incident and expressed their regret over what happened, calling upon the police to clear up the conditions that have a bearing on the incident and to work with all the capabilities that are available to them to ensure the safe return of the charge d'affaires.

However, the confusion and the complexity of the situation were increased by the announcement that was broadcast by the Voice of the Phalangists Radio that a spokesman for The Palestinian Revolution's Eagles Organization had contacted [the radio station] and informed it that the organization was responsible for kidnapping the Jordanian diplomat and that it was threatening to execute him if Jordan did not turn over the two Syrian pilots who are members of the Muslim Brothers and who had sought asylum in Amman. This announcement caused political circles to wait in order to determine the credibility of the report and the identity of the agency behind this operation.

The second and the third days after the kidnapping operation went by, and the fate of the Jordanian charge d'affaires was still clouded in mystery. The investigation was going around in circles, and determining the identity of the kidnappers continued to be a question that needed to be answered. But the wave of rumors and mysterious statements returned. The French Press Agency and the Voice of the Phalangists received another statement from the representative of the kidnappers outlining the conditions for al-Muhaysan's release. The most notable of these conditions was that negotiations were to be conducted through the embassy of North Yemen in Beirut. This was later changed to [the embassy of] South Yemen. The two escaped Syrian pilots were to be released, and the PLO was not to interfere in the negotiations. The statement announced that the time limit for carrying out the conditions of al-Muhaysan's release would end at 5 p.m. on Monday--that was 2 weeks ago. Otherwise al-Muhaysan would be executed. Half an hour after that the location of the body would be announced. The spokesman indicated that the Jordanian charge d'affaires was suffering from a nervous breakdown, and he claimed again that he was a member of The Arab Revolution's Eagles Organization even though that organization had denied responsibility for the kidnapping. The spokesman also claimed that al-Muhaysan had been returned to Beirut from Syria before dawn the preceding day and that the condition of his health continued to decline. He added that his organization followed "the instructions" of the leadership of the ruling party in Syria. A few rumors had mentioned that al-Muhaysan was in a secret hideout in Syria. Other rumors mentioned that he was in the town of al-Labwah in the area of Ba'labakk. Meanwhile some sources rumored that he was in the forest of 'Armun where the body of journalist Salim al-Lawzi had been found. Al-Lawzi had been kidnapped under circumstances that were almost similar [to those of al-Muhaysan's kidnapping].

In the midst of these complicated climates the heads of the accredited

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Arab diplomatic delegations in Lebanon held a meeting in the home of their chief, the ambassador of Kuwait. They reviewed the circumstances that had a bearing on the kidnapping of their Jordanian colleague, and they formed a tripartite committee which included the ambassadors of Kuwait, Tunisia and Algeria. This committee went immediately to the home of Minister of Foreign Affairs Fu'ad Butrus and delivered to him a memorandum asking him that the utmost efforts be made to save al-Muhaysan. The memorandum focused on honoring the immunity for the diplomatic corps.

The action of the Arab diplomatic corps was followed by another action undertaken by the foreign diplomatic corps. In a memorandum delivered on their behalf to the minister of foreign affairs, Mr Fu'ad Butrus by the Pope's ambassador, the foreign diplomats denounced the kidnapping and expressed the anxiety of the diplomatic community in Lebanon. The memorandum requested that practical measures be taken to prevent the recurrence of such action and also to allow the embassies to take their own security measures.

Lebanon: the Jungle

In a memorandum submitted to the Arab League the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized that such an action endangered the lives of diplomats in Beirut and threatened stability in Lebanon. The memorandum asked the secretariat of the league to ask the Arab countries to carry out the necessary communications with the Lebanese and Syrian governments for the release of the kidnapped diplomat as soon as possible.

The Jordanian prime minister [indicated that he] was holding the Lebanese authorities responsible for ensuring the safety of al-Muhaysan. He said, "If Lebanon is incapable of protecting diplomats, we will call upon all the countries to withdraw their embassies from Lebanon until peace there is established." He added that Syria had taken over the authorities of the Lebanese government and had turned Lebanon into a jungle where outlaws roamed freely.

After this round of details about the kidnapping incident which shed some light on the agency that committed the kidnapping as well as the Arab and world reactions that accompanied it, the major question that is still being asked, despite the battle of accusations between Syria and Jordan and despite the mutual vengeful measures and the elimination of the common border stations that resulted from the incident, is this: What is the fate of Hisham al-Muhaysan?

Reference must be made here to the fact that an action of this kind is only undertaken by organizations that are affiliated with organized agencies. The importance of the incident lies in the fact that the accusing finger which the Jordanian government used to point to the kidnappers was pointing in the right direction. Reference must also be made to the fact that the claims made by the Revolution's Eagles Organization were challenged by a Lebanese security official, who described its statements as

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very curious indeed. This is because secret groups contact press agencies only once and their telephone conversations do not last more than 2 minutes so they can prevent their call from being traced by the police. But this organization called again and indicated in a recent telephone conversation, which the Voice of the Phalangists did not broadcast, that it had carried out its decision to execute the Jordanian charge d'affaires.

What adds to the conviction of observers that the Jordanian government was not wrong in its expectations is the fact that it had some kind of premonition about what was going to happen. This was expressed by an official spokesman for the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The spokesman said, "The Lebanese authorities had been told previously that such dishonorable actions that are planned by agencies which have been accustomed to act under the cover of darkness and in the absence of reason were possible." This made [these agencies] engage haphazardly in irresponsible conduct to hide their identity which is no longer hidden from anyone.

Is He Alive or Not?

What is the fate of al-Muhaysan?

The Jordanian authorities are still hoping that al-Muhaysan will be returned alive, but the stories about his fate are conflicting. There is a story that he was killed 24 hours after he was kidnapped. There is another story that [his] kidnappers are determined to do away with him after taking away from him information they think he has. It is the opinion of one Lebanese official that assuming that al-Muhaysan has not yet been killed, in addition to the statement made by Syrian minister of foreign affairs, Mr 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam that his country had nothing to do with the incident, the mutual accusations and condemnations that followed his kidnapping signify that his kidnappers have washed their hands of his blood if he is still alive.

The prevailing belief in Beirut is that the kidnapping incident could not have taken place in the region of the Syrian deterrent forces without the knowledge or the approval of these forces. All the assumptions indicate that, whether al-Muhaysan is alive or not, it is not in the interests of those who committed the incident to reveal their identities.

Some observers tie the kidnapping incident to three concurrent incidents. These are:

1. The attempt to assassinate the Jordanian prime minister, Madar Badran by a group of Syrians who were arrested in Jordan sometime before last week. They were led by a colonel in the Syrian army.
2. Obstructing the way of the Iraqi diplomatic mail car on the way to Beirut Airport.
3. The fact that the Jordanian charge d'affaires had been in Jordan 3 days before he was kidnapped.

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It is known that al-Muhaysan was kidnapped no more than 3 days after his return from Amman. News of the attempted assassination of Jordanian Prime Minister Madar Badran had not yet subsided. This triggers the belief that this incident, in addition to the Iraqi diplomatic pouch incident, could have been in response to what had happened in Jordan to reveal or to obscure information. Those observers think it unlikely that coincidence is a factor in these three incidents. It may be that this was what led Minister Butrus to ask the Arab ambassadors when he met with them after al-Muhaysan was kidnapped to work for the suspension of the intelligence war that was being fought between them. It were as though he were indicating indirectly some of the circumstances that had a bearing on the kidnapping.

The Special Deterrent

What irritates Lebanese officials most is the fact that they are being called upon to bear their responsibilities at a time when the Lebanese authority can exercise no influence on much of its territory. In response to Jordan's holding Lebanon responsible for what happened, one of the politicians said that Lebanon must first be able to protect itself before it can protect others. All the Arabs are being called upon to become aware of what conditions have come to [in Lebanon]. It is hoped that they will take notice of the nature of the functions which the forces that are found on Lebanese land are assuming. Even though the Arab deterrent forces did enter Lebanon by means of an Arab resolution, all the Arabs have to assume their responsibilities towards what is happening. Together, they have to decide to rescue Lebanon from what it has come to by means of an Arab resolution also. Instead of having a sense of reassurance and safety that would be spread by what is called the deterrent forces, all the Lebanese people are living in a climate of anxiety and fear because these forces are concerned chiefly with their private interests instead of the public interests of the Lebanese people.

What is causing the Lebanese people to worry more than they did in the past is the fact that the kidnapping of al-Muhaysan is a new symptom of new political and strategic trends throughout the region whose coming chapters are still unknown. The incident is not the first, and it will not be the last, even though it is the most infuriating. The Lebanese government is fearful of another round of violence in which a new team of players would enter. [The Lebanese government fears] that this will be an indication of the outbreak of a war of liquidations and assassinations and that it would bring about the collapse of relative calm in Lebanon by means of non-Lebanese agents.

It may be that Lebanon will remain, until further notice, the first and the foremost victim of kidnapping in the region.

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LEBANON

CONTROVERSY OVER EXTENSION OF SARKIS'S TERM DISCUSSED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 27 Feb-5 Mar 81 pp 22-23

[Article: "Will Sarkis Extend His Term 2 Years? Sarkis Says, 'The Lebanese People Will Feel Sorry That My Term Is Over' "]

[Text] The battle of the presidential elections in Beirut has begun before its time. Discussion has begun about the possibility of extending President Sarkis's term for 2 years if security conditions were to prevent new elections from being held.

Sarkis is denying that possibility.

But what is the opinion of Damascus and Lebanese political circles on that matter?

Anyone who meets the president of the republic, Mr Ilyas Sarkis these days notices a touch of despair characterizing his facial features. It were as though he had somewhat lost hope that a solution to the crises and problems that the country is experiencing would come soon. Or it were as though he were hoping that his term would expire before the occurrence of any political or military escalation whose indications had begun to loom at a distance.

It may be that he is at present recalling memories of the early days after he assumed his constitutional responsibilities. It may be that he is finding out that the insoluble political problems that confronted him at the beginning of his term were still there and that they had rather become more complex.

One of those who is close to the B'abda Palace--the seat of the president--says that what arouses the wrath of the Lebanese president these days is not only the fact that problems are getting worse, but also that the "battle of accusations" was sounding him out and sounding out the positions of the prime minister at the same time.

The close [source] adds, "What distressed the president even more in recent days was this campaign of rumors that he wished to extend his term. These rumors made the president announce in front of one of his visitors

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that he was patiently waiting for the remaining years of his term as president to expire so he would see how regretful the Lebanese people would be for his term as president. He was referring to the fact that his total concern at the present time was confined to preserving for Lebanon the sovereignty it had left and preserving as well the lawfulness of the constitutional presidency and the official institutions of the country. Although Mr Sarkis took over the presidency of a country whose land was occupied and whose people were fragmented, a country with no government, no army, no institutions and no funds, his chief concern today, as those who are close to him are saying, is to turn over to his successor a country that has numerous political and military components, not to mention material and moral capabilities."

The state of despair which the president is experiencing is attributed by observers to several reasons, the most important of which are [the following]:

First, the repeated attacks on the south and the effects they have on general conditions.

Second, the kidnapping of the Jordanian charge d'affaires and the poor effects that [incident] had on Lebanon's foreign relations and the fear that diplomatic representation in Lebanon would diminish.

Third, attacking the prime minister's position at the al-Ta'if Summit and accusing him of covering up the positions of the president in an attempt to force him to resign.

Fourth, casting doubts about the administration's position on the problem of regulating the army's conditions and promoting officers. This includes the president's position in al-Ta'if and ends with the implementation of the security plan.

Fifth, accusing the president of taking sides with the Lebanese Front--the Phalangist party and the rightist organizations that are allied with it--and of adopting the Phalangist position in the efforts he personally undertakes to achieve a Syrian-Phalangist reconciliation that would hide behind it the preparations for the coming presidential elections.

In view of these given factors observers are noticing here that the state is determined this time that it will not be distracted by any contrived problems from confronting all the parties with the facts it has at its disposal. The fact that the administration behaved as though it had the green light for taking action attracted attention. Regarding the repeated Israeli attacks, the administration clearly announced that military operations that were carried out by the Palestinian Resistance from the south were among the most important reasons for these attacks. Besides, the armed Palestinian presence does in itself encourage Israel to bomb Lebanon. Today, more than any other time in the past, the administration is counting on the fact that these attacks will place the Syrians in an extremely embarrassing position. Israel had announced its intention to

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resume air raids as long as the Lebanese skies remained open to the Syrian air force. This will embarrass the rulers of Damascus who are incapable of responding to these raids because they are especially preoccupied with the domestic difficulties of the regime. They are also embarrassed inside Lebanon because of the growing campaign that is calling for their withdrawal. This is what is making observers expect a season of liquidations, assassinations and escalations, and these may sweep Lebanon in the next few months. (See the previous issue of AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI.)

Regarding the kidnapping of the Jordanian charge d'affaires, the state has taken measures for the first time from which one would deduce that it is not pleased with the security role that the Syrian deterrent forces have been playing. This is because charging the police forces with the task of guarding and protecting diplomatic embassies and delegations has major significances. On the one hand, it shrinks the responsibility and the functions of the deterrent forces themselves, and it also proves, on the other hand and in an indirect manner, that confidence in these forces has been shaken completely after the kidnapping of the Jordanian charge d'affaires, Mr Hisham al-Muhaysan. There is no doubt that the decision to seek the help of the police forces was a field measure that concealed a political position which will become clearer in the next few days.

Waiting for the Train

In the course of analyzing the reasons for the administration's determination to go forward with its confrontation of the opposition's campaigns, some government sources are exchanging information to the effect that the state was now in the course of preparing for a new step to deal with the Palestinian presence. This new step requires that the question be transferred to the United Nations. These sources add that what was mentioned in the president's address at al-Ta'if was not far from the inclinations of the U.S. administration and some European countries. Accordingly, it was a step towards the internationalization of the Lebanese question. This inclination is reinforced by a revelation made by other political sources about a secret visit to Lebanon that was carried out recently by an American figure of Lebanese origin. That person met with the president and assured him that the new U.S. administration will give Lebanon significant scope that stems from its conviction that such scope was necessary to maintain the unity and the sovereignty of Lebanon and to preserve its borders.

Those who are close to President Sarkis are saying that he is determined these days to treat matters firmly despite the despair that overcomes him as a result of the decline of the political and security conditions in general. He has begun to feel that it is the state before everybody else that has the responsibility for making the preparations for the next presidency. The objectives that are being sought by the government's opposition in its campaigns against him and against the government have been confirmed. If, as those who are close to the president affirm, the opposition was disturbed by the discussion circulating in some political

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circles in Beirut about the possibility that President Sarkis's term may be extended for 2 years, this idea of an extension was proposed as a contingency measure that could be resorted to in case a new president cannot be elected. Hence, the possibility would become a solution if elections became impossible. This would prevent the country from falling into a constitutional vacuum, especially since hope that the crisis will be resolved has become weak if in fact it has not altogether vanished.

This is in addition to what is being talked about in some circles about the fact that the administration's attempt to separate Lebanon's crisis from the crisis of the region has failed. The tie between the two crises is increasing day by day, and there is no hope that the Lebanese crisis will be solved before a solution to the Palestinian crisis is found. Unless there is an international and an Arab understanding or agreement about what is happening on the Palestinian question, it would be futile to find a permanent solution to the Lebanese question. However, if an emergency solution is found, it will be an interim and a temporary solution that does not deal with the roots of the Lebanese crisis in depth. It is this that explains the "hard-line" policy which is being followed towards what is causing Lebanon distress. Following a hard-line policy on the Lebanese problem is not so much a local Lebanese method as much as it is a reflection of an international and an Arab policy that puts Lebanon on a waiting list until a seat becomes available for the Palestinians on the train of proposed solutions to the Middle East crisis.

The president's early interest in the continuity of the lawful government was not spontaneous. His interest rather developed as a result of actions that were begun by some political circles which seek the establishment of political fronts in preparation for an agreement on a program for the presidency and for the president. The rapid efforts that are being made, for example, by former prime minister, Mr Rashid Karami to form a broad national front are not unknown to anyone. If calling for the departure of the current government constitutes the first step in the plan that has been devised, then organization of a new cabinet that would be imposed on the administration would help play a significant role in the battle of selecting the next president.

What attracts attention here is the fact that Damascus had been waiting for President Sarkis so it could come to an agreement with him about the program for the next stage. That program included safeguarding the atmosphere for the continuity of the lawful government and for the election of a new president. Damascus was surprised when the Lebanese side proposed a Syrian-Phalangist agreement as a preface to that agreement and to the plan about which an agreement was intended. This in itself constituted the principal reason for the fact that the Lebanese-Syrian agreement has not yet been achieved.

The one who was surprised most by the proposal of a Syrian-Phalangist agreement was Mr Rashid Karami who had begun to take quick action to encircle the administration and the Lebanese Front together and to catch

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them at the appropriate time. Even the Lebanese National Movement itself had begun to prepare itself for facing the next stage. Its circles were saying that a military or a political escalation was inescapable in the next 2 years. This was based on the movement's analysis that the chasm between the Lebanese was becoming wider, that their struggle for power was increasing and that the differences between them were growing. The attempt to bring together former president, Mr Sulayman Franjiyyah and the leader of the National Bloc party, Mr Raymond Iddih--who is exiled in Paris--and to add them to the broad National Front is merely [an attempt] to seek information about the danger of the rift that is taking place among the Lebanese and the importance of establishing cohesion among them.

What aroused the fury of the opposition and made [its members] expedite preparations for the coming stage was the series of biases for the Lebanese Front that began to characterize the president's practices, and especially his bias at the al-Ta'if Summit. It is known that the Lebanese people are divided in their views about the causes of the Lebanese crisis. Whereas the Lebanese Front thinks that it is the armed Palestinian presence that is the disease which led to the destruction of Lebanon because the armed Palestinians infringe upon its sovereignty, they violate Lebanese laws and customs and they disturb the balance upon which the 1943 National Pact was built, circles of the National Movement and the Islamic and national mainstream think that the primary reason for the destruction of Lebanon was Maronite control of the state's agencies and institutions. If government in Lebanon is a partnership between Christians and Muslims, actual practice overlooked that equation.

There are numerous examples of this. The story about the resignation of former prime minister, Mr Sa'ib Salam in 1973 after Israeli intelligence assassinated three Palestinian leaders in Faradan Street in Beirut is an example always cited by political circles. Under the political imbalance that was taking place, the prime minister was not able then to punish the commander of the army because the president stuck by him. Every time there is a clash of this kind between the president and the prime minister, it is the prime minister's office that pays the price since there is no other way out for him but that of resignation.

A quick return to the number of governments that have succeeded each other in Lebanon since independence proves the theory of incompatibility in the practice of government between the president's office and that of the prime minister. There were more than 40 governments during the terms of 6 presidents. Because of the existing practice, a president can remove governments and form them without supervision or accountability even though it is the government that assumes the responsibility for what it does while it is in the position of responsibility, and it is the president that dictates the laws but does not govern. This is well-known in the constitutional laws from which Lebanon derives its system. Since the government in Lebanon applies these indisputable constitutional notions as it pleases, and since those who cannot be put on trial and held accountable are given responsibility, the prime minister's principal concern

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came to be to preserve his position by guaranteeing as much harmony and agreement as possible with the president's positions and by appeasing him.

These circles think that Lebanon's problem lies in the fact that the president is in control of the political decision.

They blame the presidents that held office [in Lebanon] for ruling the country as though they were presidents of their sect only instead of leading the country as presidents of all of Lebanon. This is the reason why other Lebanese people feel that they've been deceived because institutions have deteriorated and the authority has been weakened. Accordingly, the foundations upon which Lebanon, the homeland and the state, has been built have collapsed.

This difference in the Lebanese people's view of Lebanon's problem requires that the president assume a position that would unify the two positions or differ with both and adopt a solution that would unify the ranks and restore the government's lost esteem. However, what President Sarkis did by adopting a policy of "waiting for the Lebanese to come to an agreement," wasted many opportunities and made the situation more complex and more entangled. Thus, Muslims' circles and circles of the National Movement are calling for a settlement of the ongoing disputes between the Lebanese people by ensuring political and social equality and by bringing an end to the days of supremacy that brought perils and destruction to Lebanon. These circles add that when this is achieved, the united Lebanese people will then certainly be able to impose what they want on the Palestinian Resistance. It would then become easy to control the Resistance and to impose conditions on it. On the other side the Lebanese Front is calling for a solution that would terminate the armed Palestinian presence [in Lebanon] before looking for any formula that could lead to the agreement and the unity of the Lebanese people. The Lebanese Front is rejecting any attempt whatsoever to look into the subject of dealing with the political, administrative and legal problems that the country is suffering from before the subject of the armed Palestinian presence is dealt with.

President Ilyas Sarkis in particular has been waiting during the past years for Arab and international conditions that would have allowed him to assume a position following the point of view of the Lebanese Front and not conflicting with what the national Islamic position was proposing. However, the Camp David accords and the effects these accords had on the Arab scene in general and on the Lebanese scene in particular prevented him from assuming such a position. However, the fact that the end of his term is approaching has forced him to take a stance on what was bringing the country down, in the hope that it may be possible to take a few steps forward and to stir conditions. But the government insisted on and asserted its position of separating Lebanon's crisis from the crisis of the region. This was announced to the members of the diplomatic corps, and it was reaffirmed at the al-Ta'if conference, indicating an inability to find a solution to the problems of Lebanon before the Palestinians and the

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Arabs find out about the poor effect that the armed Palestinian presence is having on the country.

Hence, the president would have totally adopted the position of the Lebanese Front.

It is this that made political circles accuse him of being biased. They were displeased with the fact that he adopted the Phalangist's point of view, and they asked, how can the prime minister go along with him on that? They hold Mr Shafiq al-Wazzan responsible for covering up this position, from the standpoint that if the shortcoming that occurred was due to al-Wazzan's inexperience or short-sightedness, it behooves the Muslims to call upon the prime minister to resign. If what the prime minister did was the result of weakness, then a strong prime minister who does not hesitate to find decisive positions should assume the responsibility in a stage such as that which the country is experiencing.

Hello?...Damascus Is on the Line!

This bias with which Lebanese political circles are primarily occupied has created a kind of lost confidence between Beirut and Damascus that led to the postponement of the bilateral meeting. In addition, there is a disparity in points of view within the Islamic community itself. Whereas Mr Rashid Karami thinks that the requirements of the next stage make the resignation of the government necessary, the leader Sa'ib Salam thinks that letting al-Wazzan's government go would be futile, except that the establishment of a broad national front may conceal more dangers than the positive factors it may include.

One of the politicians who is known for being well-informed affirms that the battle of the presidency has been opened prematurely and that its danger this time lies in the fact that the disputes of the Lebanese people have increased, not declined. It is this that is making the question of electing a president a "maze" whose outcome is unknown. The politician adds that the Lebanese scene will be beset by surprises, which may establish by proof the strange solutions and great matters that every faction began promising the other faction.

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LIBYA

ITALY SEEN AS FEARFUL OF QADHDHAFI'S 'INCREASING INFLUENCE'

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 27 Feb-5 Mar 81 p 16

[Article: "Millions of Dollars Distributed for Personal Propaganda in Newspapers and Television; Italy: Increasing Suspicions of the Role of the Qadhdhafi System in Spying to the Soviets' Advantage"]

[Excerpt] Italians are complaining about the increasing influence of President Qadhdhafi in Italy, in the midst of the prevailing chaos in the political field. There are strong suspicions about the existence of a relationship between Libya and the organizations active in political violence [in Italy].

Libyan propaganda concentrates directly on Qadhdhafi's personality, which is unacceptable to the Italian public opinion. The enemies of the Arabs are thus given a chance to attack Arab causes.

In Rome, for example, a private television station offers, on a regular basis, explanations for the Third World theory which the Libyan president originated, as well as explanations of his Green Book.

In Sicily in Southern Italy, Libya began forming a pro-Qadhdhafi lobby. In 1972, a Sicilian lawyer named Michael Baba formed a Libyan-Italian Friendship Committee in his town, Catania.

Last September, Michael Baba held a commemoration ceremony for the "Conqueror's Revolution" by inviting 3,000 people. Fireworks were displayed for the occasion, and rockets were released in the air, drawing Qadhdhafi's picture.

It is difficult for reporters in Sicily to direct any criticism against the Mafia or President Qadhdhafi, since millions of dollars have been poured into newspapers and media networks.

There are, for example, two television channels that broadcast direct propaganda for the Libyan president; and the Laura newspaper, which is the strongest daily newspaper, is publishing a bi-monthly supplement about his accomplishments. Moreover, Libyan investments control the weekly Sicilia Oggi magazine.

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In 1972, Libya bought about 10 percent of Pantelleria Island which is located midway in the sea between Sicily and Africa. The [Italian] government finally interfered to stop the purchase operations by declaring the island as a military area.

Two Libyan-owned companies run the tourist trade in the island. However, suspicions increased when the Libyans paid one million dollars to buy a deserted hill that overlooks the island's airport which houses the NATO ally base. Italians fear that Libya may put that hill under the Soviet experts' disposal to spy on the base.

In most cases, the Italian government is forced to overlook the activities of the Libyan system in consideration for their commercial relations. Libya ranks fourth in petroleum exports to Italy. The value of trade reaches around \$2 billion annually. There are 15,000 Italians working in Libya.

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LIBYA

AL-QADHDHAFI'S ECONOMIC, POLITICAL INTERESTS IN ITALY

Milan IL MONDO in Italian 30 Jan 81 pp 10-13

[Article by Cesare Peruzzi: "The Colonel's Boot" [Italy]]

[Text] The first target was public opinion, through the medium of three television stations in Sicily, heavy pressure on the press, fifth columns in the political parties. Then came the investments: not only in Fiat but in an endless chain of properties concealed behind a facade of figureheads. Here you have the basis of his influence.

How large are these investments, where are they, and by whom are they being managed? This question has become a very timely one in recent weeks, ever since Col Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi, Libya's supreme leader, began to carry out his grand strategy vis-a-vis Italy. Nothing of a military nature, of course: only a skillful stage production that makes use of all the economic and political channels at his disposal on the peninsula. What is it all about? Libya has extensive interests in Italy, even though (except for its investment in Fiat) it has never disclosed the extent of these interests nor by whom they are being managed. In contrast to the reality--which has always been well concealed--the official data speak of a total investment of 370 billion lire, not including the acquisition (for 100 billion lire) of Bot. Bazzecole. For the past 4 or 5 months, moreover, there have been clear indications of an even more intense Libyan interest in Italy, beginning with the decision to underwrite the increase in Fiat's capital despite the crisis in which the Turin corporation finds itself. The final episode (which IL MONDO is able to disclose) is of recent date: while on the one hand the Tripoli government has shut off the flow of methane to the ENI [National Hydrocarbons Agency] (the report was confirmed a few days ago by President Alberto Grandi) it has on the other hand asked the Italian entity to enter into negotiations for acquisition of the Milazzo refinery from the former Monti group. This would enable the negotiations already in progress between the ENI and Kuwait to be oriented toward Libya. The first signs were already apparent last September in Sicily, however. Unprecedented demonstrations were held that month in Catania and Palermo to celebrate the 10th anniversary of al-Qadhdhafi's revolution--with fireworks and with the principal regional authorities in attendance. Speaking at the sumptuous Bellini villa in the very center of Catania during the festivities held in that city Michele Papa, a lawyer with good connections in the Tripoli courts, triumphantly announced the opening--in the near future--of the first mosque in Italy, precisely in the city of Catania. The announcement was true, but it was not the whole story: Papa had in fact failed to mention that the money for

the mosque had come from Tripoli. Then in December a strange proposal emerged from a conference on Islamic culture held in Palermo by the CRES (Center for Economic and Social Research), which has close ties to the socialist Michele Achilli.

Antonio Tusa, a Catanian teacher of republican persuasion, launched the idea of creating a Mediterranean community as an alternative to the European counterpart--a concept which in many respects appears to coincide with al-Qadhdhafi's strategy. Simultaneously, several of the major Sicilian news organs are now being pressured to adopt an attitude that is not hostile to Libyan policy.

Then last week al-Qadhdhafi decided to come out into the open, in person: he asked to come to Italy on an official visit, and thereby provoked extremely harsh reactions in Rome (see IL MONDO, No 4). What are the Libyan leader's intentions?

The Plan

Even before he came to power al-Qadhdhafi realized that Italy--the weak link in the European Community--and Sicily in particular constitute an ideal bridgehead en route to the heart of Europe and therefore to the heart of NATO. It would in the future be of fundamental importance to wield some influence in this area--which is strategic for the equilibrium of the Mediterranean--and also to bring to Libya the technology and experience of Italy. For this reason, as early as 1960 the young al-Qadhdhafi (at that time a captain in the royal army) struck up a friendship with Enrico Mattei, president of the ENI--the newly-created Italian state petroleum enterprise--which was prospecting the Libyan substrata in search of petroleum. Al-Qadhdhafi and Mattei had two things in common: the certainty that Libya was rich in petroleum, and a dislike for the multinationals. On the evening of 26 October 1962--before leaving Sicily in his personal plane and crashing just outside Milan--Mattei met at Gela with several representatives of the faction of al-Qadhdhafi, who was already planning to overthrow the king. It is not impossible that Mattei may have intended to finance the revolt of al-Qadhdhafi and the current prime minister 'Abd al-Salam Jallud (then a mere lieutenant and also a good friend of Mattei), in return for the right to exploit at least a part of Libya's petroleum deposits, but he did not have time to carry out that intention. Al-Qadhdhafi did not take power until 8 years later, in 1970. Even without Mattei he succeeded in carrying out his plans: he developed increasingly close relations with Italian political and economic circles, extending his economic influence all the way from Sicily to the Alps and forming ties with the Italian secret services.

It is no longer a secret (as he himself confirmed to IL MONDO 2 months ago) that Gen Vito Miceli, head of the SID [Defense Intelligence Service], prevented coups d'etat against al-Qadhdhafi on two separate occasions. The Libyan colonel has always been grateful to him--as he is with respect to all those he considers to be his friends, and he has friends in every Italian political party. He is black-mailing the ENI with the 15 million tons of crude oil that arrive in Italy every year from Libya; but he has also made use of his good friends in the IRI [Industrial Reconstruction Institute] during the tenure of Camillo Crociani as president of FINMECCANICA [Mechanical Engineering Finance Corporation], when in Tripoli there was no difficulty in obtaining the most sophisticated weapons and systems from Selenia or Contraves. In Sicily, al-Qadhdhafi suddenly found a useful ally: Graziano Verzotto, president of the Sicilian Mining Company, a Mattei man who is currently a fugitive because of his involvement in the Sindone scandal. Within the DC [Christian Democratic Party] he was favorably regarded by Aldo Moro, who for many years

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was minister of foreign affairs; and Giulio Andreotti himself recently revealed a personal pro-Libyan orientation when he declared that the recent Italy-Malta military agreement (which al-Qadhdhafi found quite distasteful) would be extended to Libya and Algeria as well. Calogero Pumilia, known as "Lillo," a "New Forces" Christian Democrat and former undersecretary of labor and agriculture, is in fact a member of an Italo-Arab committee in Sicily. The strongest pro-Libyan lobby, however, is to be found in the PSI [Italian Socialist Party].

The principal representatives of this lobby are Enrico Manca (minister of foreign trade, who at this very moment is visiting Libya and is a good friend of Jallud) and Michele Achilli. It is a current of opinion that has lost influence with the advent of Bettino Craxi to the party leadership, and of men such as Lelio Lagorio to the Ministry of Defense--but one that is still making itself heard. For example, Emo Egoli, a member of the PSI committee on foreign affairs, in propagandizing his pro-Libyan doctrine makes use of a private television station in Rome--Teletevere--which almost every evening transmits, over the airwaves of the capital, images of al-Qadhdhafi and salient passages from his famous "Green Book."

Pamphlets, propaganda books and publications in the Arabic language are published to some extent everywhere in Italy, and in Sardinia (as in Sicily) several printing establishments have been purchased for this purpose. In Catania al-Qadhdhafi can count on two private broadcasting stations, Tele Sicilia Color and Radiotrinacria, and on a biweekly, SICILIA CGGI. This phenomenon has also extended to the Palermo daily L'ORA, which for more than a year has been publishing a biweekly insert in Arabic. Except in the case of L'ORA, however, the journalistic level is in general very low.

Al-Qadhdhafi made the biggest qualitative "leap forward" in this strategy for winning political favor and public approbation in 1976, in the form of the Fiat transaction. For Libya it was a financial investment (360 billion lire went into the coffers of the Turin industrial firm in exchange for 9.1 percent of Fiat's capital stock, a figure which will increase to 13.4 percent as of the end of 1982), but above all it was an opportunity to gain prestige in Italy and in the world as a business partner of the Agnelli family. To date, the fact is that Fiat has not increased (in terms of percentages) its penetration of Libya whereas al-Qadhdhafi has expanded his direct influence in Italy, even in strategic sectors such as the arms industry (through Gilardini, Fiat controls the torpedo production of Whitehead Moto Fides, a Livorno company which regularly sells arms to Libya and in Italy trains al-Qadhdhafi's technicians). He can, moreover, count on the frequent presence in Italy of 'Abdallah Sa'udi and Rajab 'Abdallah Misallati, two international-level banking experts who sit on the Fiat board of directors.

Sa'udi's presence in Italy is further linked to his position as president of UBAE (Union of Arab and European Banks), in which Libya is the largest shareholder (a 7 percent interest). Sa'udi has an office in UBAE's luxurious headquarters on the Piazza Venezia in Rome, whereas neither he nor Misallati maintains an office in Turin. Fiat and UBAE are Libya's only two official investments in Italy, and are certainly its most definitive investments as well--just as Sa'udi and Misallati are its most representative individuals. Al-Qadhdhafi's interests in Italy, however, extend throughout the peninsula, albeit enshrouded in maximum secrecy behind the convenient names of individuals and companies. In 1975 and 1976 only the tip of the iceberg surfaced: the main part remains underneath, but where? IL MCNDC has identified some of the poles toward which the Libyan investments have been oriented--at different times and with varying success.

Pantelleria

The Libyan money began arriving in Pantelleria in 1972 and 1973. Insofar as IL MONDO has been able to reconstruct events, three al-Qadhdhafi emissaries--Alfred Pisani, Manuel Briffi and 'Ali Sharif--had the task of identifying investment opportunities, channels and individuals. The three established contact with the boss of the island, Don Vito Valenza, a landowner who has ties to the Sicilian Christian Democratic organization. In 1974 the National Investment Company--in which Libyan government capital is invested--bought with the aid of Valenza's good offices an entire hill (known as Bugeber Hill) on Pantelleria for half a billion lire. The following year the same company bought--for 350 million lire--the Hotel Punta Tre Pietre, managed by the Libyan-Maltese Corinthia Palace Company. In al-Qadhdhafi's plans this was only the beginning. These operations aroused the suspicions of NATO, however: what did al-Qadhdhafi propose to do on Pantelleria? To block future acquisitions, an old military law was dusted off--one that prevents aliens from acquiring property in militarily strategic areas just such as Pantelleria. It wasn't of much use, however. The Libyans in fact organized a company of convenience--Suaki, Ltd--which made Valenza and Giuseppe Di Fresco (also a Sicilian property owner) its titular heads, behind which it is not difficult to discern the presence of Libyan capital. Suaki's activities have been very intense during these past few years. It purchased for hard cash large plots of land at Sciuveki, Monastero, Gelfiser, Nika and Saltalavecchia.

A good part of Pantelleria is today under the control of Suaki: that is to say, under the control of Valenza and Di Fresco, which in turn is to say, under the control of the Libyans. Not a few are wondering, moreover, what lies behind the Pharaonic project for enlarging the island's small airport (at a cost of more than 30 billion lire), the contract for which was recently awarded to the Recogra Company of Catania. The project will permit the landing at Pantelleria of even DC-9's and military aircraft.

Sicily

How many billion lire has al-Qadhdhafi invested in Sicily? Based on the official records: none. According to estimates obtained by IL MONDO in circles closely connected with Libya, however, the real total is at least 500 billion, a figure which could rise to at least 700 billion with the acquisition of the Mediterranean refinery at Milazzo. The estimate is very approximate, however, for want of information. Where are these funds? How did they get to Sicily? By whom are they being managed? Three sectors are involved: agriculture, real estate and fishing, but the Libyans are also interested in small and medium-sized business. Al-Qadhdhafi's money has definitely bought some of the best real estate in Palermo, Catania and Siracusa, as well as agricultural enterprises near Enna, Caltanissetta and Siracusa that grow grapes, fruit, and out-of-season produce in greenhouses. These investments are of course well hidden behind Italian names and Italian companies, and often (as in the case of the Mazara del Vallo shipping companies) behind the formula of the "joint corporation." There are two channels for investment: the first channel passes through certain major entrepreneurs of Palermo and Catania and consists of awarding contracts and placing orders in Libya in exchange for buildings, hotels or agricultural properties. Accordingly, the stream of money that flows from Tripoli to Palermo (2 trillion lire in 1980) frequently includes (albeit camouflaged) these Libyan investments in Italy. The evidence of these transactions (including first

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and last names and dates) is jealously guarded in impregnable safes by banks, and by complacent notaries. One person who is unquestionably a good friend of al-Qadhdhafi is Arturo Cassina, cement manufacturer and building contractor of Palermo, nicknamed "The Count" because of his title of nobility and his 19th Century mannerisms. To obtain orders in Libya many small businessmen must first place their trust in the good offices of the Count. Behind Cassina there are many others, as for example Piero Pisa, a native of Brescia who is likewise a building contractor and heads a company--the Brescia Construction Corporation--which for the past 4 years appears to have operated in Libya without any competitors. To some extent, however, everyone has had to conform to these rules.

In order to work in Libya even Northern Italian companies have had to use Sicily as a base for their operations, as for example the Dilleto company of Parma, which operates in Sicily through an associated company, Catania Sigeco (which also does work for NATO), and is very active in Tripoli. The second channel for Libyan investment passes through the banks. To trace this channel back to the source is impossible, but there is no doubt that funds are being transmitted from foreign financial establishments (in Vaduz; Switzerland; Luxembourg; and especially France) to Italian banks, whence it is being reinvested. This is a phenomenon to which some credit institutions have called attention, particularly in the past several months.

Also in the past few months, Libya decided to speed up the timetable for a project in Sicily which for some time has been close to its heart: that of the formation of joint companies. As far back as 1976 the then president of the region, Agostino Bonfiglio, went to Tripoli to negotiate agreements for this purpose in the fishing, glassmaking, manganese and potassium salts sectors. Today, however, at least 10 percent of the 200 fishing boats at Mazara del Vallo are also working for Libya. The owner of these fishing boats is Italian but the fishing company is a joint enterprise, and the fishing boats are at liberty to enter the prohibited waters of the Libyan Mammellone.

There is an explanation for this phenomenon: Libya has money but has no technicians. For this reason it has already been compelled, in the past, to rely on individuals who were not exactly simon-pure. This is true in the case of Papa, a 160-kilogram Catania lawyer characterized by scant professional success but great activism in behalf of al-Qadhdhafi: in 1973, together with Christian Democrat Filippo Ielo and UIL [Italian Union of Labor] trade unionist Giuseppe Amato, he founded the Sicilian-Arab Society. Papa had his moment of glory on the occasion of Billygate, the scandal that involved the brother of the president of the United States, Jimmy Carter, because of the brother's business relations with al-Qadhdhafi--a relationship which was arranged precisely through the intermediary of Papa. It is true, however, that the lawyer from Catania has recently lost a great deal of status inside the tent of Colonel al-Qadhdhafi.

The Continent

A few months after he came to power al-Qadhdhafi formed a group of 10 businessmen--the best that were available to him. He gave them maximum freedom of action (they were accountable for everything only to him) and supplied them with funds. Their assignment was to tour the world in search of profitable investments but above all to win back the Libyan refugees who had accumulated large fortunes abroad. Al-Qadhdhafi did not want their money, and did not even want them to return to

Libya; he wanted only their cooperation. Italy was one of the marketplaces where al-Qadhdhafi's men operated most extensively and most profitably. This is a chapter which is rather difficult and dangerous to explore, but for simplicity's sake it can be summed up in two concepts. First, many Libyan citizens live and work in Italy today; businessmen, manufacturers and financiers who are wealthy, who are protected, and who still maintain relations with al-Qadhdhafi; and second, the Libyan state has unquestionably made very large investments in the real estate and tourist sectors, using Libyan citizens residing in Italy as figureheads. Where are these investments being made? In Naples, in Rome and the immediate environs of the capital, in Tuscany, in Romagna and in Milan. They are buying up everything they can: from industrial sites to buildings that are suitable for restoration. They care not for old things: no 16th Century palaces or liberty villas for them, only buildings that are new or that can be remodeled.

The businessman who took over a large textile mill in the Bergamo region is a Libyan. In his own country he had been a big hotel owner (he owned a total of 18) and is now playing the role of an industrialist in Italy. The new owners of entire subdivisions in Versilia, and of various hotels on the Ligurian coast, are likewise Libyans. At least a dozen Libyan businessmen who operate out of Milan are investing, and making acquisitions, in Romagna and also make frequent trips to Rome. They have billions of lire in their bank accounts. Some of them were gunned down by mysterious "killers" last Spring, while others continue to live and work in peace.

The UAE has accordingly always played an official role of supplying credit for Italian-Libyan trade--a flourishing trade indeed. Many of these accounts, however--accounts which are of significance in identifying Libyan interests in Italy--do not appear even in the documents of the Ministry of Foreign Trade (the only trace of them is to be found in the files of the secret services). How is it, then, that al-Qadhdhafi--who has always had plenty of freedom to move about in Italy and in doing so has often displayed great arrogance--has felt it necessary in recent months to come out a little more into the open and in fact to ask to be officially invited by the Rome government?

The Game

There are two answers to this question, one of which is political and the other economic. Following the Italy-Malta agreement--and especially after his expansionism in Africa had put him at odds with other European countries, including France--al-Qadhdhafi has obviously been attempting to regain favor. In Italy, however, he had lost favor some time before, and this was what provided the impetus. But the economic explanation is the more significant of the two. Over the next several years a very important game will be played out in Sicily, involving the "methanization" of the island; a revival of tourism, launched by certain large public and private groups; the flood of billions (1.5 trillion) of lire appropriated by the government for the irrigation of lands in the interior; and the increasingly close attention accorded by the European Community to the island's agricultural resources: all of which are signals which most likely did not escape the attention of observers in Tripoli any more than they did that of certain major Italian financial groups. Proof of this is the acquisition--by S. Paolo of Turin, in association with the Bank of Sicily--of equal participations in the Bank of the South, and also the interest evinced in the Agricultural Bank of Canicatti.

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Moreover, the National Labor Bank is reportedly about to acquire a credit institution in Trapani, and the ENI has just allocated 700 billion lire for investments in Sicily. If such an important game is going to be played on the island, it is therefore only logical that all the potential contestants prepare for battle--including Colonel al-Qadhdhafi.

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LIBYA

BRIEFS

WEAPONS FROM BRITAIN--Libya is trying to purchase military and electronic equipment for its armed forces from Britain via the Greek company, Idolater. British informed sources estimate that the value of the deal is between \$100 and \$200 million. This includes electronic and other complex equipment which will increase the effectiveness of Libyan artillery and missiles in the defense line which Libya is building along its borders with Egypt. The deal is considered as a feeler to determine whether Britain intends to join France and several other European nations in imposing controls on the sale of arms and modern military equipment to Libya, after its attack on Chad and its several adventures in the African continent. Libya is currently awaiting an official clearance from the British government to conclude the deal. The deal seems to be tempting to the British who are currently suffering from stagnation of commerce and a frozen state of export of the products of their war industries faced by sharp competition from France and the U.S. It is known that the Soviet Union is the principal supplier of arms to Libya. [Text] [Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 27 Feb-5 Mar 81 p 47] 9455

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SUDAN

ABEL ALIER ADDRESSES SOUTHERN ISSUES

Khartoum SUDANOW in English Mar 81 pp 12-14

[Interview with Abel Alier by Jacob Akol; date and place not given]

[Text]

Probably no-one has been a more significant figure in Southern Region politics since the ending in 1972 of the Civil War than Abel Alier, who was returned to the presidency of the HEC last June after a two-year absence. In his first interview since coming back to power, he gave Jacob Akol his retrospective analysis of the nine years of peace, and expounded his ideas for the future:

JACOB AKOL: *Looking back over the last nine years of peace in the South: could there have been a better deal that would have safeguarded the special interests of the South as well as the general interests of the Sudan?*

ABEL ALIER: The present arrangement within the limits of a united Sudan is good for the people of Southern Sudan; that's my view.

Q: *Has the integration of the Anya-Nya into the national armed forces worked out to your satisfaction?*

A: Yes, but when talking about the problems of integration, we should give time to the absorption process itself. It was not an easy thing to execute, and a problem that many shied away from. Not many of my colleagues thought it possible; well, it has been done so successfully that it now looks easy.

Q: *The agreement appears fair and straightforward on paper: have you come across any anomalies in practice?*

A: The agreement concerns human relations, and such arrangements, be they political, social or economic, cannot be that easy when it comes to implementation. I did not take a simplistic view

of it, knowing it was going to be difficult, but I think we have gone very successfully in implementing the spirit of the agreement.

Q: *In the course of implementation, how were you received by your colleagues in the North?*

A: If I had not received any cooperation, by this time we would be back in the bush fighting. I asked for full cooperation and I received it from the President and my colleagues, in the North as well as in the South.

Q: *Over the years you have repeatedly called upon the Southern people to tighten their belts, because we are a poor people who must live according to what we can afford. Are you satisfied that the practices and living standards of members of your government are strictly in conformity with the desired code of conduct?*

A: Well, I am not complaining. But I am not saying that all those working in the region agree even with this policy: there are people with varying views. But I would also like to point out that those politicians and civil servants are not all that well off. They have economic problems which anybody living among them would understand as gigantic. But in spite of these economic problems we have not refrained from telling them that they are leading a people who are badly off; that our mode of living should be as close as possible to theirs so that we may maintain credibility as leaders. Again, my job is to persuade not cajole.

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Q: What led to your relinquishing power in 1978?

A: Frankly, I don't know — I don't often ask questions of this nature. I didn't regard the responsibilities of the South as being so attractive that one would wish to cling to power. I thought the problems were so difficult that those put in charge of them were at a disadvantage, and was very happy the last two years I was in Khartoum. I didn't have to spend so much energy as I used to when I was president of the HEC. In 1978, when I learned that the presidency was a very interesting position and that people should take turns at it, I respectfully stepped down.

Q: Is tribalism or partisanship a threat to the stability of the Southern Sudan? To what extent do they influence political decisions?

A: Tribalism is there, as it is in all developing countries. People who are economically at a disadvantage will use any slogan that might promote their interests, and that is the negative aspect of tribalism.

If abilities and skills are not emphasised above all, tribalism can lead to the appointment of people not because of their qualifications but by virtue of belonging to a particular tribe or section — that is something people in leadership should avoid.

With regard to partisanship, may I say that I recognised way back in the sixties that in developing countries a multi-party system might not suit. In the Sudan, the idea of a single party organisation came from a number of Sudanese, of whom I was one. I am a believer at this stage in a system which should embrace most of the enlightened groups in our society, adopting multi-dimensional policies to enlighten others and eliminate the negativity that characterises multi-party systems. It is because it places so much emphasis on negative aspects that the multi-party system is a non-starter in developing countries; one argues merely to corner the opposition. We have not evolved this type of practice. Political wrangling often results in politicians forgetting the people they were supposed to serve.

Q: Yet, even in the North it is recognised that under the SSU umbrella the old parties do operate. In the South, loyalties to the Sudan African National Union (SANU) and the Southern Front (SF) exist and indeed influence political decisions; don't you agree?

A: There are people who say this, and there are those who think they can use the old parties to gain what they want; I disagree with them entirely. I do know, however, that some people can't achieve certain positions through merit, so they resort to tribalism or previous political affiliations.

Q: What lesson, if any, has been learnt from the power struggle which brought you back last June?

A: You should really ask others what they have learnt. People seem to have had second thoughts during the two years I was away from the South: Perhaps they have come to think that I have something substantial to offer.

Q: Are you simply continuing the same policies and development programmes from where you left them in 1978, or has there been any radical shift in policy, priorities or in the means of achieving them?

A: I am continuing the basic policy of self-reliance. While we cannot finance our development projects or train our manpower without the support of the central government and/or the international communities, we can only expect to be helped when they see us trying our best with the resources we have. Only then shall we receive substantial assistance.

We have certain priorities; for instance the completion of some of the industrial

projects that have ground to a halt, to give employment to the many who are now idle in these projects. The momentum of essential services such as health and education — which have a long way to go — has also to be maintained.

Priority is also being given to physical infrastructure such as roads. Of course, roadbuilding is costly and does not interest many aid donors since it is a service which does not provide a financial return, but I think some of

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our discussions with friends and well-wishers over the past seven months have been satisfying.

Q: How are you preparing the people of Jonglei and Upper Nile provinces to cope with the environmental and social changes that will inevitably arise from the development of the canal and the oilfields?

A: With regard to the Jonglei canal, people in the area are getting government assistance after a long absence; to provide essentials such as clean water and education, and other aspects of modernisation such as improvement in agricultural and livestock management techniques. This they consider beneficial.

Concerning Bentiu, there are currently various ideas as to where the refinery should be built. Every citizen is entitled to his own view, and a healthy debate is still going on.

Q: What level have the refinery discussions reached?

A: Since oil is the responsibility of the Minister of Energy and Mining, discussions are at the level of central government; but we believe that they are aware of the need to consult the Southern Region for our views, and I suspect this is being done.

Q: Is there now a review of the situation, in spite of the decision to site the future refinery at Kosti?

A: I wouldn't say there is a review; rather that there is a continuing debate over the suitability of the venue chosen for the refinery. It is good for a democratic society to continue debating such issues even when a decision has been taken, in my view.

Q: Southern members, having pointed out an error in a map attached to a bill for the National Assembly, see Northern attempts to force the bill through as a possible return to the old days of mistrust. How do you regard this?

A: I wouldn't look at it that way. This action might have reintroduced some element of mistrust, but I see the whole issue as one of lack of appreciation of constitutional powers by both the legislative and executive bodies. I am pleased that this affair has reminded people of

the existence of the Regional Self-government Act and Article Eight of the Sudanese Constitution. I doubt whether many of our educated elite have read this very important document. The border issue has brought the implications of this law into focus, and I hope the appropriate lesson has now been learned. It was because of this ingrained history of mistrust that in 1972 we worked out this document so that certain elements would not have the chance to bring discord to the country. There are strict provisions about amendments to the Act; this is not accidental but based on past experience and foresight.

Q: Both your governments and that of General Lagu have so far failed to effect Southern Region administration in a number of areas clearly stated in the agreement as parts of the South. What has been the difficulty?

A: As far as I was concerned I had my own priorities; firstly the absorption of the Anya-Nya into the armed forces, the rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees, and providing the basic manpower to administer the whole of the South, without which I could not administer Kafia-Kingi or anywhere else. Once it was clear that Kafia-Kingi was part of the South, it became a simple matter of implementation. Even now one has to provide adequate manpower and facilities so that the people affected do not become disillusioned. Administration of those areas would have been effected in 1978, according to my original schedule; but by then I was no longer President of the HEC. However, Kafia-Kingi and Hufrat el Nahas are now under Bahr el Ghazal province. The agreement on Kurmuk does not say that we were to take it over: it talks about a referendum, and this applies to Abyei as well. The Regional government accepts any area that comes from the South as a result of a referendum, but does not itself advocate or implement such referenda: that is a function of central government. It is also up to the people in those areas to advocate a referendum and satisfy the central government that they have a case. As one who took part in the negotiations, I thought we had given the people of Abyei and Kurmuk sufficient opportunity to take up the

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case where we left off. Implementation is not the Regional Government's task: there appears to be a misconception here.

Q: Accepting what you have just said; what about the fighting now going on around Abyei: does that not concern the South, since it is to the South that the victims of unrest come?

A: Anything that happens in any part of the Sudan concerns the South just as much as events at our borders with the northern regions. We are also concerned that the people of Abyei should be given the opportunity to utilise the privileges given them by the constitution to decide whether to remain in Southern Kordofan or come to Bahr el Ghazal. The committee recently set up by President Nimeiri embraces the principle of referendum enshrined in the Addis Ababa Agreement and in the constitution, for the people of Abyei. But can a referendum be conducted successfully when there is unrest in the area and many people have dispersed?

Q: What is your government's attitude to the Sharia laws? Do you, as a lawyer, see the necessity of such legislation for the Sudan?

A: This is like asking whether democracy is good. Sharia laws have many very good aspects. Those who have studied legal philosophy will know that even our civil laws have traces of the Sharia — the basis of justice to the individual is there. But if you are talking about Article 16 of the Constitution — where I have heard that some people want to amend it so that the balance is tilted towards certain aspects of the Sharia — then I would say that it is not good and I would not be part of such an arrangement. Article 16 took more than ten days to shape into its present form; it was the result of a difficult and emotional series of discussions, and the outcome was the classic compromise of the Sudanese people. To attempt to undo that article is to throw us back into emotional turmoil and disagreement, and could in some way destabilise our governmental system.

Q: There has not been a Southerner in central government for close on twelve months, and the South remains under-

represented in the diplomatic service. What is your reaction to this?

A: True, in the past the South has always had somebody in central government; but he is not there as a representative of the Southern Region; he is chosen on his merits alone. An executive, whether in regional or central government, is part of a team selected by the head of that government to meet its objectives. Representation is carried out in the Assemblies.

I have had an understanding with President Nimeiri that the president of the HEC should have first choice of the Southerners when forming the Regional Government. If the president of the Republic, however, mindful of the various constituents of Sudan, feels that he needs suitable people to work with him at the national level, that is his responsibility alone.

At the level of diplomatic missions, this again is not a question of representation. If it were, then we should have embassies of the South abroad: in a united country like ours this cannot happen. In fact, the region pulled out two ambassadors because we felt that their services were more needed in the South: it was not the President's decision. I am sure he knows the benefits of reflecting the diversity of the country abroad.

Q: What is your assessment of North-South relations over the last nine years of peace?

A: Considering the history of the two regions, I think the relationship over the last nine years has been very good. Many wounds were inflicted between 1955 and the Addis Ababa agreement, and these violent conflicts went a long way in eradicating trust and confidence between people. What has evolved since 1972 has been a miracle, but feelings of bitterness after a long war do not die away overnight. Even in the USA, the wounds of their civil war are still felt and reflected in the society. It is indeed remarkable that we have evolved a workable relationship within the Sudan in such a short period: after all, the agreement was almost unanimously described as fragile, and was reached during world economic crisis. The

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economic problems of 1973/4 forced most of our well-wishers to withdraw their pledges, leaving us almost without support: this could have thrown us into fresh conflict born out of frustration and existing mistrust, but we didn't succumb to this threat. This to me is a milestone in the evolution of trust and honesty, in the admission of cultural diversity and its value to the people of Sudan.

Q: As the South begins to pick up economically, though, some Northern politicians have expressed the view that the agreement is merely a stepping-stone for future secession in the South. Has the South given them any reason to feel this way?

A: Well, they are entitled to be concerned, but insofar as Southerners consider the Sudan to be a united country, and uphold the constitution, they feel there is room for differences without necessarily involving separation. The oil question is one example: some say that if the refinery were built at Bentiu it could stimulate development in the area. That is not to say that Southerners want the oil for themselves alone; they are just saying that Bentiu is one of the least developed parts of the country, and there could be no better incentive to convince people of the need to develop the area.

Q: President Nimeiri now appears to have given the go-ahead for the Regional Government to take its development problems to the oil-rich states. What do you think prompted this move?

A: The President has been prompted by a long debate, and we are agreed that certain things have to be done, particularly in the Southern Region, with assistance from inside and outside the country — one of these sources being the Gulf states.

Q: How serious is current Arab interest

in the development of the South?

A: Like any other wealthy body, the Arab states have their own pressures on them for money — pressures from the Islamic world, which we can appreciate. Our representatives have been well-received, however, and the delegation led by Bona Malwal has been reciprocated by fact-finding missions from the Gulf, so I am hopeful for some positive responses to our needs.

Q: What significance does your government attach to the various aid and international agencies now operating in the region?

A: They are very helpful; in fact, I cannot see how the South could have managed in the last nine years without the goodwill of the international community represented in the region by these agencies. The Sudanese as a whole are appreciative of the support that has been given us by the aid agencies in spite of their own acute economic problems, and I want them to feel welcome.

Q: How would you sum up the last nine years of the Addis Ababa agreement?

A: Not many have been able to follow the problems closely; those who have would say it has been a success during a difficult time for the world; to which I would add that there remains a great deal to be done. Basically, the people of the Southern Region should have education, clean water, medical care and the chance to use their technical and other resources for self-promotion in modern economic development. Anyone in a position of leadership should naturally be concerned with making the best use of what is available, but with our present resources we cannot say that we can cater for the full aspirations of our people. Nor should we be discouraged, however: we should regard these difficulties as a challenge to human tenacity.

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SUDAN

AFRICAN POLICY CONCERNS HIGHLIGHTED

Khartoum SUDANOW in English Mar 81 pp 8-11

[Article by Abdel Moneim Awad el Rayah and Jacob Akol: "Stretching Sudan To Its Limits"]

[Text] *Sudan has responded vigorously to the Libyan intervention in Chad, regarding the invasion as a direct threat to her own security. Instability on the eastern borders had formerly been regarded as the greatest threat to Sudanese security, but with the marked improvement of relations between Khartoum and Addis Ababa, and the latest developments in Chad, the threat has shifted dramatically from the east to the west.*

Further south, in Uganda, instability has led to an influx of refugees, hampering further the work of local authorities.

No wonder, then, that activity on the diplomatic front has heightened recently. Abdel Moneim Awad el Rayah and Jacob Akol examine some of the efforts Sudan has made to face this new danger, and look at the nature of the rather complicated relationship she has with her neighbours.

WITH ITS MEAGRE resources and 7,580 kilometres of borders, shared with eight largely unstable countries, Sudan resembles a big man left out on a cold night with nothing but a tiny blanket to ward off the icy wind. Pulled upwards to cover the head, it exposes the feet; drawn downwards it leaves the head uncovered. Political developments along Sudan's western borders during the past few weeks have lent force to this description.

The occupation of Chad by Libyan troops on the 15th of last December has

been a matter of grave concern for Sudan, and prompted a strong reaction from the Sudanese government. In reply to a message from Colonel Qaddafi of Libya — in which the Libyan leader had said that since Libyan occupation the war had stopped and safety and security had been returned to Chad — President Nimeiri stated that, in fact, the war had only just begun, and it would not cease until Libyan troops withdrew from Chadian territory.

According to the *International Herald Tribune* by the middle of January, Sudan had closed its borders to all foreigners except those engaged on diplomatic business, and had started moving troops westwards to bolster its thin defences along the 600-kilometre Chadian border.

In an interview with the French magazine *le Figaro* last January, President Nimeiri described the situation on the Chadian border as being 'extremely serious,' with Libyan and Russian troops concentrated in Abeche. 'Three big Tupolev 22's provide a shuttle service for the (Libyan) tanks. I have to regroup my forces along the frontier and I must observe minutely every subversive uprising in these distant provinces. The destabilisation of Africa would be a catastrophe for all of us,' he told the magazine.

Of particular worry to the Sudanese authorities is the thought that the occupation of Chad has been engineered and sustained by the Soviet Union, and that Qaddafi has acted only as an intermediary. 'This last intervention in Chad is

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not Qaddafi's; he does not have the means; his officers are not that able. Even the conception of the attack is not his style. It is obvious that, behind Libya, it is the USSR which is at work," said President Nimeiri.

Despite Colonel Qaddafi's assurances through diplomatic channels and public statements that Sudan had nothing to fear from the presence of an estimated number of 5,000 Libyan troops in Chad, Sudanese officials and other observers view these assurances with a growing lack of trust and credibility. The Libyan leader has previously been quoted as saying that he will carry the war into Sudan, Egypt and even France. Furthermore, a high-ranking Sudanese officer serving on the western front has recently disclosed that the Libyans are building, with Soviet help, airstrips on the Chadian border close to Sudan. The construction of these airstrips has been interpreted by many military observers in Khartoum as an attempt to bring targets in Sudan within the range of Libyan aircraft. Indeed, a proposal to set up a long-term self-sustaining agricultural project for Chadian refugees in El Geneina has been vetoed by Sudanese military authorities on the grounds that such a project would be under permanent threat of Libyan aggression.

On the internal front, there are fears that the Libyans might try to foment troubles in Darfur. Following demonstrations last January in Darfur, in which some people died and others were hurt, members of the National Assembly from that Region sent a memorandum to President Nimeiri requesting the resignation of the then governor of the region, El Tayib el Mardi "... in consideration of the circumstances surrounding the region; circumstances which call for consolidation of the internal front against those who wish evil on the country." In his reply, the President - who had earlier instructed the governor to resign - lashed out at the 'conspiracies directed against Sudan's security from both inside and out.' Though events in Darfur have remained localised they underline the threat to stability posed by the uneasy situation in Chad.

At another level, the Libyan invasion of Chad has been of concern as well to Sudan's friends; in particular Egypt, France and to a lesser degree, the United States. President Sadat responded immediately by stating that Egyptian troops would intervene if Sudan's security were threatened 'whatever the length or the intensity of the war.' There then followed reports of the visit to Cairo of a high-ranking Sudanese security official; and in Khartoum, the Egyptian charge d'affaires Mohamed el Shafie Mekki, confirmed the arrival of several Egyptian military and other delegations. 'There is no doubt,' stated Mohamed el Shafie, 'that Egypt will stand by its commitments under the defence agreement signed between the two countries in 1977, and these visits are for the purpose of military and political co-ordination.' This firm commitment to Sudan reflects Egyptian fears of possible Soviet 'encirclement'

should Egypt's southern neighbour fall into Russian hands. According to Mohamed el Shafie, Sudan and Egypt share a complementary security strategy; what happens to Sudan directly affects Egypt and vice versa. 'That is why we see the Libyan invasion of Chad as directly affecting the security of Egypt,' he stated. When Dr Kissinger once predicted that Russia's next target would be Sudan, President Sadat replied that there would never be any question of foreign intervention in Sudan - indicating that Egypt would take steps to prevent such moves.

Relations with France seem to have witnessed something of an upswing recently, and there is evidence to show that the Sudanese government will be looking increasingly to France in the future for support. 'Every African country is today endangered by the underground work of Moscow, and France must stay awake with us. Immediate decisions need to be taken...' President Nimeiri told *le Figaro*. Some decisions, it seems, have already been taken; especially by France who, according to one well-placed Sudanese official, 'have given us a gift of arms.' The gift is believed to have taken the form of anti-aircraft weaponry.

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Robert Gally, the French Minister of State for Defence and Co-operation, visited Khartoum late last January, and at a meeting with President Nimeiri 'reviewed current developments in the region, finding the points of view of both parties identical on all the issues they tackled...'

The French minister also met with General Abdel Majid Hamid Khalil, the First Vice-President and Minister of Defence, and discussed agreements for the provision of military equipment for the Sudanese Armed Forces. Reports in the Arab press said that while France and the United States had traditionally been reticent about supplying arms to Sudan, following the Libyan intervention in Chad, both countries had suddenly become more than willing to open negotiations over arms sales. The reports went on to say that Sudan has already supplied France and America with a list of her needs backed by guarantees of payment from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

There have been indications that the Sudanese government had not seen eye to eye with the Carter administration in the United States, particularly over the issue of arms supplies. Although the Reagan government is expected to pursue a much more hawk-like foreign policy, Sudan is reserving judgement for the moment. However, a senior Western diplomat in Khartoum told *Sudanow* that the Reagan administration was in the process of thinking through a new policy in the region. 'There will probably be a more explicit redressing of the power-balance,' he said. In a recent message to President Nimeiri, the American Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, described Sudan as 'a stable island in a sea of turmoil.' The American ambassador to Khartoum sees Sudan as playing a 'sensible stabilising role in the area. We are going to maintain our ties with Sudan with more aid, both military and economic,' he told *Sudanow*.

According to another senior Western diplomat in Khartoum this 'new look' by Washington would start with a judgement on Ethiopia, the nature of the regime, its relationship with the Soviet Union, and the possibility of the Ethiopian government following in the footsteps of Egypt, Somalia and Sudan.

'The only way this could happen,' he said, 'would be to cool the situation in the area — develop a *modus vivendi* between Ethiopia and Somalia, settle the Eritrean conflict and develop Ethiopia in a way which would make a Soviet presence there redundant. The other problem (for the Americans) is Libya, and how to handle Qaddafi.'

It seems that his Western view coincides with those of Sudan and Kenya, who see stabilisation of the area as the only possible means of terminating super-power presence in the Horn of Africa. This might well be the reason behind Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia's current moves to revive their regional agreements which have lain dormant since the early 1970s. 'The poor state of relations between Sudan and Ethiopia has impeded the functioning of the machinery in the last few years,' said the Ethiopian ambassador to Sudan, 'but with confidence now restored between our two countries, the leaders of the three states have agreed to the resumption of the activities of the Tripartite Ministerial Commission, and

the next meeting shall be convened in Addis Ababa soon.'

However, some political observers believe that this policy of tripartite co-operation is linked to a Western attempt to woo Ethiopia into the Western camp. But according to Ethiopian ambassador Yilma Tadesse: 'Any attempt to link it to this or that objective is not only speculative but also unproductive.'

If the situation in Chad has brought to the fore Sudan's relations with her northerly neighbours, instability in Uganda has highlighted Sudan's relations with the countries on her southern borders. In an interview with *Sudanow*, Mr Abel Alier, President of the High Executive Council in the Southern Region, announced: 'Relations between Sudan and Kenya are excellent.'

The Southern Region receives over half its imports, largely in the form of petroleum, through the Kenyan port of Mombasa. The ideal route to Juba is through Uganda, but instability in that country in recent years has resulted in the use of the difficult but more direct route through Kapoeta in Sudan and Lodwar in Kenya.

In spite of the ancient tribal war between the Turkana of Kenya and the

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Toposa of Sudan, relations between the countries' local authorities have moved from warmth to intimacy. Assistant Commissioner of Kapoeta, Natale Pancrasio, told *Sudanow* late last year that his counterpart — whom he has never met — in Lodwar 'has always been sympathetic' to the isolation of Kapoeta, which lies about 300 kilometres east of Juba. 'More than half the goods in Kapoeta's shops,' said Mr Pancrasio, 'come through Kenya. As long as we have the money, the Kenyan local authorities will sell us commodities not usually allowed for export.'

The instability of the Ugandan route has resulted in the speeding up of progress on the largest ever joint-venture between Sudan and Kenya: the Juba-Kapoeta-Lodwar road. Returning from a Kenya-Sudan Joint Technical Committee meeting in Nairobi last January, Sudanese Regional Director of Communications and Roads, Mr Elisa Matayo told *Sudanow*: 'The meeting has drawn up a time-schedule which we hope will lead to the start of construction proper on the road sometime this year.' The construction of this 575 kilometre road is expected to cost \$172 million, at January 1980 prices. USAID and the EEC have pledged some \$10 million and EUA 10 million respectively. The road, two-lane tarmac, is expected to treble the amount of traffic passing between the two countries, and improve further existing good relations.

Relations between Sudan and Uganda have been characterised over the last two decades by issues concerning the movements of refugees. Uganda was host to tens of thousands of refugees from Southern Sudan in the 1960s. Following the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972, Sudanese refugees returned home and were quickly followed by large numbers of their former hosts. The Acholi and the Langi tribes who supported President Obote fled to Sudan when Idi Amin came to power. They returned to Uganda when Amin was ousted two years ago, but they were replaced by even larger numbers of Ugandans from the West Nile

province. By June last year the UNHCR office in Juba reported the presence of over 40,000 refugees, mostly from Uganda, in Southern Sudan. This figure climbed to 70,000 following the abortive invasion of the West Nile Province by allegedly former Amin supporters in September last year.

It was hoped that after the formation of Obote's government the refugees would return home. These hopes were dashed last month when fresh outbreaks of violence in the West Nile Province resulted in an additional flow of refugees from Uganda. UNHCR officials in Juba now estimate the number of refugees in Southern Sudan who have arrived from Uganda to be over 80,000.

Compared to the Ethiopian refugees in the north, the Ugandan refugees have found it relatively easy to settle down among their tribesmen in the South. They have, however, presented Sudan with a difficult security problem: large quantities of automatic fire-arms and ammunition have been sold on the black market to Sudanese tribes in the south and west.

The government of Mr Alier is hopeful, however, that Uganda will soon solve her refugee problems. 'In my view,' Mr Alier told *Sudanow*, 'now Uganda has a democratic government she should be given time to solve her urgent problems. Many people have lost their lives and we do not want to increase Uganda's problems by pressing for the return of the refugees right now. I, personally, expect that a man of Dr Obote's stature will emphasise what he has already stated to be his policy; a spirit of reconciliation must be cultivated because refugees will only respond when they see signs of this kind of attitude. The refugees here are safe, but I look forward to the day when they will return peacefully to their homes.'

Zaire had also been home for Sudanese refugees escaping from the civil war, and when they returned to their country after the accord, they, too, were closely followed in by their former hosts, this time northern Zaireans fleeing after the

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collapse of the 'Simba' rebellion. Since 1975, however, the vast majority of Zairean refugees have either filtered back to their own country or have become integrated into the Sudanese community. However, security officials are worried that the Zaireans who have returned to their country are not progressing far across the border and, with their knowledge of local Arabic, have become the centre of an illegal but lucrative arms trade between Yei and Kaya on the West Bank of Eastern Equatoria province. There is indeed a weather-beaten little town 38 miles south of Yei and eight miles north of Kaya on the Sudan-Uganda border. Its name is Mile Thirty-Eight or *Thamania* ('Eight' in Arabic) depending on whether the speaker is north or south of the town. Travelling south through the town, the left side of the road is in Sudan and the right in Zaire, but all this border business is only for the convenience of the smugglers who inhabit the town. There is no law there; the crime-rate is so large that former Regional Minister for Public Administration, Mr Natale Olwak Akolawin has suggested immediate joint action by Zaire and Sudan be taken to clarify the position of their common border. But *Sudanow* learns, however, that until now, no progress has been made and that *Thamania* remains the centre for organised criminals from Sudan, Uganda and Zaire.

The border area between Sudan and the Central African Republic is thinly populated and activity between people and governments of the two countries remains minimal and unobtrusive. Perhaps the most fervent act of diplomacy bet-

ween the two states took place in 1976 when a former high ranking Anya-Nya officer murdered in cold blood one of the most promising Anya-Nya commanders, Brigadier Emanuel Abur, and fled to the Central African Republic. The officer was returned to Sudan from Bangui after secret diplomatic contacts between the two countries.

Ethiopia has also played host to thousands of refugees from Southern Sudan, but since their return in 1972, the border between the South and Ethiopia

has been relatively quiet. Latest reports, however, talk of 'thousands' of refugees from Ethiopia gathering around the Boma area which lies just inside the Sudanese border. The report was first made late last year by 65 refugees, all men, who reached Bor, capital of Jonglei province, in poor health. They said 80 had started out from the Boma area. Fifteen, they said died on the way from hunger and malaria, to which they were easy prey having descended from the mosquito-free region of the western Ethiopian highlands. Fifteen more died later in Juba, while the remaining fifty are said to be in 'good health' by UNHCR officials. The refugees insist that their families and kinsmen, numbering at least 5,000, are awaiting their return to the Boma area. They say their mission was to come and ask the British - who they thought were still ruling Sudan - for arms so they could fight 'the invaders from the east,' presumably the Ethiopian government. UNHCR officials believe their story to be incredible though they are considering a trip to Boma early this month. ■

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SUDAN

MANY AGENCIES WORK ON REFUGEE PROBLEM

Khartoum SUDANOW in English Mar 81 p 20

[Text]

The arrival last winter of 8000 refugees from war-torn Chad is yet another weighty load placed on the back of a camel which is already bearing 440,000 (predominantly Eritrean and Ethiopian) refugees. Moreover the government expects a further influx of 3000 Chadians, who are currently making their way towards the Sudanese border. Sudanow reporter Awatif Sidahmed spoke with Government and United Nations officials responsible for dealing with this new development, and filed this story:

FOR YEARS Chadians have entered Sudan in large numbers, but generally this was either part of the Hajj or to look for work, especially in the Gezira. Until recently Chadian political refugees were in a decided minority amongst their compatriots here. Prior to 1964 such individuals were considered 'rebels' against the recognised government in N'djamena; after '64 they were viewed as liberation fighters and were offered refuge on this basis. With the fall of the southern, Christian dominated Malloum government in 1979, and its replacement by a northern, Muslim coalition headed by Goukouni Oueddei and Hissene Habre, Sudan had its first experience of accepting southern, Christian refugees from the Sara tribes. These refugees were welcomed, both as an act of charity by one people of the Book to another and as a means to defuse their opposition to the coalition government endorsed by Sudan.

With the collapse of the coalition, and the resulting Oueddei-Habre clash culminating in the Libyan invasion and the battle of Abeche, thousands of Muslim political refugees again entered Sudan. Travelling through Kulbos in northern Chad so as to avoid the Oueddei-Libyan controlled direct route through Adri, the latest influx flooded el Geneina, Sudan's western gateway to Chad.

To assist the latest arrivals the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) quickly donated \$1 million, as well as some material. However, crucial as money is, it is also often the easiest of the refugee-related problems to overcome. Developing an actual programme of assistance remains the responsibility of the Sudanese government. As a preliminary step the government divided the refugees into three groups: the people of 'Sultan Abshi' - driven from Chad by the Goraan tribe - were welcomed by the 'Sultan Masalit', a related ethnic group on this side of Sudan's border which has long opposed the Goraan tribe; former Chadian government officials, who were placed in a local rest-house; and combatants, who were disarmed.

Medical and food supplies quickly ran short. As a consequence the government purchased dura in El Geneina market, thus promptly driving prices up. 'At noon we bought a pound of waika for 60pt.; at 2pm the price was 80pt. Of course this is a 'normal' difficulty, one of the typical problems refugees 'cause' to the area accommodating them. But it was made

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worse because this is a poor area,' said Ahmed Kardawi, Sudan's Assistant Commissioner for Refugees after his late December on-the-spot investigation.

In order to hasten the arrival of relief supplies, Kardawi spoke to officials about the possibility of military air-flights. The authorities promised five flights. 'We gave them £11,000 but unfortunately they gave us only one flight. They said more money was required, but it was also a problem of bureaucratic inefficiency,' Mr Kardawi continued. After a three week delay Mr Ibrahim Diraij, the Governor of Darfur Region, contacted the Darfur Lorries Company in Khartoum. For a fee of £1000 per lorry medical supplies, blankets, tents, and dura were transported to El Geneina.

International voluntary agencies such as the British Red Cross also provided assistance, although in its case the goods supplied were not always up to scratch. 'The British Red Cross sent us about 8000 blankets but they were not in good condition - though they were perfectly packaged,' Mr Kardawi observed.

The refugees' future is far from clear. Some of Sudan's Commission on Refugees officials wish to interest the UNHCR in a long-term proposal to construct self-sustaining agricultural projects. However, military authorities are not enthused with this idea, saying that although it would benefit El Geneina, such projects would always be held hostage to Libyan bombs. ■

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SUDAN

BLUE NILE PROJECT TEST OF DECENTRALIZATION

Khartoum SUDANOW in English Mar 81 p 31

[Article by Mustafa el Sunni]

[Text] **DESIGNED TO IMPROVE** the returns of small farmers, the Blue Nile Integrated Project (BNIP), occupying 200,000 rain-fed feddans south of Damazin, offers an early test of the workings of the government's decentralisation policy. 'We will be closely watched as a model - hopefully positive - of the experiences of regional authorities in managing large scale, multi-faceted projects,' said Mr Khalid Shams-eddin, BNIP manager. 'If we are successful, the administration of the project will essentially devolve upon the local authorities.'

The BNIP itself is a complex series of efforts and initiatives, involving several stages and many different categories of people. The project's time-frame is six years, covering a first stage of a 200 feddan pilot-verification farm in Damazin, a second stage of diffusing the lessons of the pilot farm to neighbouring farmers, and a final stage of evaluation and follow-up. US aid provides \$12 million in the form of experts, equipment, farmer-loans capital, and improved seed varieties. The local component of £3 million covers local salaries, buildings, and infrastructure. The project is being implemented by American Experience Incorporated.

Farmers, rather than being lumped together, are recognised as already differentiated as regards size of land-holdings, working capital, and so on. The project has attempted to devise initiatives and opportunities appropriate to the means available. All farmers, for example, will enjoy access to agricultural loans and improved seeds; but for those who already have and are willing to invest savings, there will also be machinery and equipment for rent or purchase at subsidised rates. 'Cooperatives will be

established all over the project area in collaboration with the Ministry of Cooperation, Commerce and Supply, in order to organise, protect, and service the farmers,' continued Mr Shams-eddin.

The BNIP will introduce a new agricultural system and methodology which, if successful, may be replicated elsewhere in Sudan. Farmers and their sons will be taught to drive and maintain tractors; health centres will be established by Care Corporation (a private American aid foundation); grazing areas will be established for nomads, thus reducing the traditional possibility of farmer-nomad clashes attendant upon the expansion of agricultural areas; and a rotation system will be practised so as to preserve soil fertility, while green belts are planned so as to protect against soil erosion. In addition, activities to encourage and remunerate the labour of women are planned, particularly in the fields of vegetable gardening, bee keeping, and poultry products. 'The local hen production is very low compared with other areas. We will try to upgrade this by introducing better varieties. We also hope to show the importance of chicken and eggs, both to people's health and to their income,' noted Clyde Adams, head of the American Experience Incorporated team.

The BNIP will involve about 50,000 people, of whom 10,000 are farmer-heads of households. These people will be formed into about 50 small cooperatives so as to protect them against the operations of large scale agricultural capitalists. The aim is to double yields per feddan and to save 50 per cent of farmers' expenses, most of which used to go to merchants who loaned money under onerous terms. 'If we can reduce farmers' costs this is more helpful than simply putting more money in their pockets,' observed Adams.

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SYRIA

SOVIETS AMONG BROTHERHOOD'S VICTIMS IN SYRIA

LD280722 London THE TIMES in English 28 Feb 81 p 5

[Article by Robert Fisk]

[Text] Damascus--Mr Ahmad Iskandar leaned back in his leather padded swivel-chair, drew heavily on his Cuban cigar and vouch-safed his perennial self-confidence in Syria's body politic. "The Muslim Brotherhood," he said, "are smashed inside Syria. Those who have been active inside Syria are running away and those outside Syria have now started to liquidate each other. The larger part of the opposition has gathered in West Germany and Britain."

The Syrian minister of information regarded his country's internal upheavals as being at an end. But there was a clicking sound from his office door as an aide operated the special terrorist-proof lock and entered with a hand-written message. The door snapped shut behind him and itself back into the wall. Mr Iskandar is a bold man but he is clearly still taking no chances.

He conceded for the first time in an interview with THE TIMES that about 300 Syrians--Ba'th Party members, government officials and ordinary civilians--had been assassinated by the Brotherhood, and he spoke quite openly about the victims. They included he said, Dr Josef Sayegh (President Hafiz al-Asad's personal physician), Mr Ali (al-Ali), a prominent agricultural scientist, Dr Shahadi Khalil, a brain surgeon, Dr Muhammad al-Fadel, the president of Damascus University, and Dr Darwish Azawi of the Syrian Socialist Union.

Many of those who have been killed, Mr Iskandar said, were not Ba'th Party members and the victims included "three or four Soviet experts" who were working on railway development and river projects. "Very shortly," he added, "we shall publish a book listing all our martyrs, including their names, jobs, qualifications and how they were murdered."

Mr Iskandar blamed Jordan for "assassinations, killings and sabotage" and accused King Husayn's government of insincerity. "We have in our hands a lot of documents and a number of people who have convinced us that the Jordan regime was involved in these things," he said. But the minister seemed equally confident that relations between Jordan and Syria would improve. A Jordanian delegation which had visited Damascus last week, he said, had "reaffirmed their solidarity with the national attitude of Syria."

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What this means in less rhetorical language is that Syria and Jordan are now set on repairing their mutual relations.

Upon this treaty, Mr Iskandar waxed somewhat lyrically although his enthusiasm did not extend to the military details of the pact. When I asked him if the brand-new Soviet-made T72 tanks I had seen in two parks in western Damascus under tarpaulins were part of a new consignment of arms from the Soviet Union, he replied obliquely: "Syrian television has shown film of our tanks on maneuvers. I can assure you that we have modern defensive weapons."

Asked if the Syrians possess L39 Czech training aircraft--seen over the city of Homs some days ago--and a new MiG 27 fighter aircraft, Mr Iskandar said that Syria was thankful to everyone who could extend help in the country's "national battle against Zionist expansion." And he added: "We will not hesitate in going to any possible lengths to enable us to face external aggression and the expansionist policy of Israel."

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